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### College Senate Resolutions

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11-24-2008

# Review of Resolution #01 2006-2007 "3 Strikes Rule" in the Department of Business

The College at Brockport, College Senate

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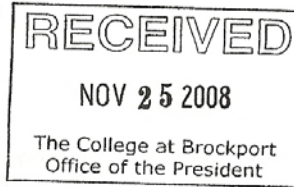
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Resolution # 04  
**2008-2009**  
**College Senate**

New Resolution: ☐  
Supersedes Res #: #01 2006-2007

TO: Dr. John R. Halstead, College President

FROM: The College Senate: *November 24, 2008*

RE:  $\longrightarrow$  I. Formal Resolution (*Act of Determination*)  
II. Recommendation (*Urging the Fitness of*)  
III. Other, For Your Information (*Notice, Request, Report, etc.*)

SUBJ: **Review of Resolution #01 2006-2007 "3 Strikes Rule" in the  
Department of Business** (routing #09 08-09 SP/EP)

Signed: *T. M. Rao*  
(*Thambraballi M. Rao, 2008-09 College Senate President*)

Date: 11/25/08

**Please fill out the bottom portion and follow the distribution instructions at the end of this page.**

TO: T.M. Rao, The College Senate President

FROM: John R. Halstead, College President

RE:  $\longrightarrow$  I. Decision and Action Taken on Formal Resolution (circle choice)  
a. Accepted – Implementation Effective Date: Immediately  
b. Deferred for discussion with the Faculty Senate on \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
c. Unacceptable for the reasons contained in the attached explanation

II, III. Response to Recommendation or Other/FYI

a. Received and acknowledged \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

b. Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: *J. R. Halstead*  
(*Dr. John R. Halstead, President, SUNY College at Brockport*)

Date: 12/19/08

**DISTRIBUTION**

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE COPIES: Provost, Vice Presidents, College Senate, Other: 12/19/08

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DEAN(S) COPY: Department Chair(s), Other: \_\_\_\_\_

COLLEGE SENATE COPIES: Originator, College Senate Website, Other: \_\_\_\_\_

# COLLEGE SENATE OFFICE RESOLUTION PROPOSAL COVER PAGE

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS: FEBRUARY 28**

Incomplete proposals or proposals received after the deadline may not be reviewed until next semester.

INSTRUCTIONS – please, no multiple attachments – each proposal must be submitted as one document:

- Submit only complete proposals. Include support letters from department chair and dean.
- Proposals must be prepared individually in Word format using committee guidelines (guidelines online).
- Fill out this cover page for each proposal and insert it electronically as the front page of your document. (available online at [www.brockport.edu/collegesenate](http://www.brockport.edu/collegesenate))
- Email whole proposal with cover page as one attachment to [senate@brockport.edu](mailto:senate@brockport.edu) and [facprez@brockport.edu](mailto:facprez@brockport.edu).
- All updates must be resubmitted to the Senate office with the original cover page including routing number.
- Questions? Call the Senate office at 395-2586 or the appropriate committee chairperson.

1. **PROPOSAL TITLE:** Please be somewhat descriptive, ie. *Graduate Probation/Dismissal Proposal* rather than *Graduate Proposal*.

Review of Resolution #01 2006-2007 – 3 Strikes Rule - Business

2. **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:**

The resolution was signed by the College President with the provision that this resolution be reviewed and determined whether or not to continue. The decision is to be made prior to the printing of the 2009 College Catalog. The deadline for the decision is November 25<sup>th</sup>, prior to Thanksgiving.

3. **HOW WILL THIS EFFECT TRANSFER STUDENTS:**

4. **ANTICIPATED EFFECTIVE DATE:**

November 25, 2008 – deadline for 2009 catalog

4. **SUBMISSION & REVISION DATES:** PLEASE PUT A DATE ON ALL UPDATED DOCUMENTS TO AVOID CONFUSION.

<i>First Submission</i>	<i>Updated on</i>	<i>Updated on</i>	<i>Updated on</i>
9/29/08	10/16/08 (J. Gardner)		

5. **SUBMITTED BY: (contact person)**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Department</i>	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Email</i>
B. Mitrano, C. Edwards J. Gardner	College Senate Dept. of Business	395-2586 395-2623	<a href="mailto:bmitrano@brockport.edu">bmitrano@brockport.edu</a> , <a href="mailto:cedwards@brockport.edu">cedwards@brockport.edu</a> <a href="mailto:jgardner@brockport.edu">jgardner@brockport.edu</a>

6. **COMMITTEES TO COPY: (Senate office use only)**

<b>Standing Committee</b>	<b>Forwarded To</b>	<b>Date</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enrollment Planning & Policies	To Committee for approval	9/26/08, 10/29/08
<input type="checkbox"/> Faculty & Professional Staff Policies	<b>Committee Chair Signs When Passed</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> General Education & Curriculum Policies *	To Executive Committee	11/3/08
<input type="checkbox"/> Graduate Curriculum & Policies	GED to Vice Provost	NA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student Policies	To Senate	11/10/08 – passed 11/24
<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate Curriculum & Policies	To College President	11/25/08
<small>* follow special Gen Ed procedures for submission of General Education proposals at "How to Submit Proposals" on our Website.</small>	REJECTED -WITHDRAWN	

\*\*Use routing number and title in all reference to this proposal.

We are very pleased with the rule.

When students make known their intention to major in our discipline they must initial a statement of the policy indicating that they have read and understand the policy. Once again as they declare their major they sign a single sheet that informs them again of the policy. We send out both e-mail and paper letters informing the specific students at risk, those taking any of our courses for the third time. Many students appear to be positively motivated to improve their performance in this situation. Some however are not.

We have invoked the rule on rare occasions. Maintaining quality of our graduates is central to the larger issue of student success if employers are unhappy with our students as they enter the workplace they will start doubting our placement results.

The policy is working in the students are well-informed of its existence.

Postscript 10/27/08

According to Eileen Daniel the policy has rarely been invoked. She only specifically remembers one instance in the past few years.

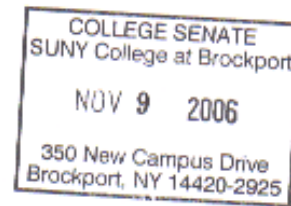
Postscript 10/27/08;

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# SUNY BROCKPORT

College Senate  
State University of New York College at Brockport  
350 New Campus Drive  
Brockport, NY 14420-2925  
395-2586 (Fax) 395-2246

## Resolution # 01 2006-2007 COLLEGE SENATE



TO: Dr. John R. Halstead, College President

FROM: The College Senate: **October 30, 2006**

RE: ⇒ I. Formal Resolution (*Act of Determination*)  
II. Recommendation (*Urging the Fitness of*)  
III. Other, For Your Information (*Notice, Request, Report, etc.*)

SUBJ: **Business Department 3-Strikes Rule** #24 04-05 UC/EP

Signed: Jeffrey T. Lashbrook Date: 11/3/06  
(Dr. Jeffrey T. Lashbrook, 2006-07 College Senate President)

Please fill out the bottom portion and return document to the College Senate Office.

TO: The College Senate President

FROM: College President

RE: ⇒ I. Decision and Action Taken on Formal Resolution (circle choice)

☒ a. Accepted

- \*Implementation Effective Date: 2007-2009 – to be reviewed for possible continuation or termination prior to publication of the new catalog for 09-11.

\*Date resolution will begin to be used by the College. (ie. spring, fall, when included in catalog, etc.)

b. Deferred for discussion with the Faculty Senate on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

c. Unacceptable for the reasons contained in the attached explanation

II, III. Response to Recommendation or Other/FYI

a. Received and acknowledged \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

b. Comment: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

DISTRIBUTED BY PRESIDENT'S OFFICE TO: Cabinet members

DISTRIBUTE ALSO TO: Originator, Academic Advisement, Registrar (as appropriate)

cc: med: John R. Halstead Date: 11/7/06  
(Dr. John R. Halstead, President, SUNY College at Brockport)

September 27, 2007

TO: College Senate Executive Committee  
FROM: Ad Hoc Committee for 3 Strikes Rule  
SUBJECT: Report

In accordance with resolution #1 2006-2007 We convened an Ad Hoc Committee to study Proposal #24 04-05 UCEP Business: 3 Strikes Rule.

The committee consisted of:

Gail Argetsinger, Theater  
Denise Copelton, Sociology  
Kim Duquette, Registration  
Diane Dwyer, Social Work  
Jim Georger, Delta College (Committee Chair)

Our mission was “to study this policy with respect to college-wide policy” which we interpreted to mean with respect to written policy in Your Right to Know and Academic Policies Handbook, as well as existing department practices, and with respect to the institutional value “Student Success”.

In our opinion, the 3 strikes policy is consistent with the ideal of student success, balancing both short term success (ie. ample opportunity to pass a required course) and longer term success in the form of fitness for a given career. Moreover we found the policy to be clearly communicated by the Business Department, employing adequate measures to insure that students are aware of, and understand the policy.

While a policy limiting course repeats is unique on campus at the undergraduate level, other departments employ standards that identify students who do not demonstrate required proficiency for the major, to the point where they may not be allowed to continue in the department. In our opinion, the 3-strikes policy was not found to be significantly more stringent than other practices.

In Your Right to Know it is stated that Brockport allows students to repeat courses in an effort to earn a higher grade (p 11, 26). However it does not specify unlimited attempts. In our opinion, the 3-Strikes Policy is not in direct conflict with the wording in Your Right To Know, but for the sake of clarity, the handbook should specify that the right to repeat courses may be limited by departmental policy.

The committee believes that similar department policies establishing standards for success such as GPA requirements or limitations on course repeats should continue to be reviewed and approved by College Senate.

Our summary recommendation is that Proposal #24 04-05 UCEP Business: 3 Strikes Rule, which allows continuation of the 3 strikes rule, be passed by College Senate.

Submitted by Jim Georger

August 29, 2007

To: Jim Georger, Chair, Senate Ad-Hoc Committee

From: Bill Dresnack, Chair, Department of Business Administration and Economics

Re: Responses to your Questions

---

Jim: Below are responses to the questions you raised via email message dated August 20, 2007. I have copied and pasted the questions from the email. My responses are in bold and italics.

1. How does the policy work for the math requirements for international business where multiple upper level courses fulfill the math requirement. eg. if a student tries and fails MTH 446, and MTH 442, are they on their third strike if attempting MTH 432?

*The required minimum math course requirement for the International Business major is sophomore level. I am not aware of a student ever seeking that major with a course other than MTH 201 (Calculus), MTH221 (Calculus for Business) or MTH245 (Finite Math). These majors are required to complete any of these courses or any higher course other than statistics. Thus, failing any of the 400-level math courses mentioned would be irrelevant if the student passed MTH201, 221, 245, or a host of others. They only need to pass one such course.*

2. How does the policy apply to electives? eg. A student chooses and fails Electronic Commerce BUS 464, will they eventually need to pass it with C- or better?

*Students are precluded from unsuccessfully completing any department course more than thrice. Thus, if the course in question is an elective for the student's major, it would have no bearing on their degree completion. For example, if a marketing major failed BUS464 three times, the student could still complete the marketing major, as BUS464 is not required for that program.*

3. You cited the number of students at risk last year. How did they turn out? Has any student thus far been compelled to withdraw from the major due to the policy?

*I am aware of a total of two students to date who have "struck out." One arranged a meeting with me at which we worked out an agreement through which he returned to MCC to complete one course he had struck out on. We also arranged for him to pursue a different major for which a second course was not required. Thus, the department worked with him to fashion a different approach, and he was thrilled with it. The other student just (two weeks ago) petitioned for re-admission based on her assertion that she was "not in her right mind" at the time due to family problems. I have not yet reached a decision, but I am likely to recommend she first satisfactorily complete the course in question at community college before being re-admitted here. I think this is a fair solution, as (1) there is significant evidence of the family problem, and (2) if she had failed the course even 20 times at community college but was admitted into our program, she would have gotten a shot at it here.*

*For re-emphasis, I want to note here that I believe we now have few students at risk because we do a good job of informing, advising and mentoring them, and because they know they have to get it done so they work harder.*



4. If a student were to try twice and fail, for example, Business Law I (BUS375), an attempt to take it at a sister institution:

A. Would the attempt be counted as a potential 3rd strike,

B. Are you concerned that a failed attempt would not be reported back to Brockport?

**A. No, taking it elsewhere would not be counted against them for the simple reason that we do not know where else they take classes unless they tell us. Presumably, they would only attempt to transfer in a passing grade.**

**B. No, I'm not concerned about that. We do not want to be the grade police or have to guess what else students might have done. If they fail twice here, we give them the appropriate written warnings. If they take a course elsewhere, fail it and don't tell us, their status is unchanged, based on the data we have.**

**From a practical standpoint, with over a thousand majors, I am not really anticipatorily concerned with the one or two who might try to get around the system. The vast majority will work with us and we will work with them. As chair of a department this size, I deal every day, literally, with students seeking exceptions to our rules or policies for a wide variety of reasons. If one or two strange three-strike situations come through, we'll address them case by case. But I am not concerned about the situations raised in this question, for the reasons stated.**

5. It seems that a full class may require turning students away, when some seats might be occupied by those making multiple attempts. Is this something you've had to deal with?

**No. Students register according to the priorities system established each term by the Registrar. If they are eligible to take our courses, they are registered according to that system (e.g., seniors first, then juniors, etc., using last name order prescribed).**

6. If, for reasons of personality, "chemistry" or teaching style, a student simply cannot learn from a professor, are there options to meet the degree requirements in all cases? This would include other professors obviously, or equivalent courses at other institutions.

**For all of our prerequisite, co-requisite and core courses, and for some of our courses in specific majors we run multiple sections, as many as five in a semester, usually at different times and days and at night. Those courses offer multiple options for choosing an instructor, and I have advised at-risk students to factor that in to courses they choose. For some required courses in each department major, students must deal with the one instructor who teaches that area. This is a fact of life. There are people we all need to work with or report to or deal with in our careers, in our personal lives, in our college curricular choices, with whom we don't have personal chemistry or whatever. That's life, that's part of the nature of earning a degree. We can't legislate that out, and its implications, in my view, are much greater than our policy. The vast majority of student learning is not from an individual instructor, but from doing the reading and assignments, passing exams, completing papers, etc. We've all had professors we thought were lousy and couldn't connect with, but we have to manage the workload and demonstrate knowledge enough to pass. I don't see any way we can tailor our instructors to meet the needs and preferences of every one of our thousand students. I don't think we should be expected to. If a student has successfully completed 117 credit hours besides the course in question, they have the ability to complete the other three-credit course. It's highly unlikely that there is one professor who will stand in the way of their degree.**

**Question for the committee: If a student claims bad chemistry with an individual professor, how SHOULD this be handled? Should we grant unlimited opportunities to try again? Should we waive the requirement?**



*Should we reassign the professor? I don't see how this can be handled other than telling the student it's a required course for this major and this professor teaches it, so pass it. Realistically, if a student is unable to figure out how to manage that situation in three attempts (plus withdrawals permitted), it is a student/personal issue, unless the professor is malicious. I hope no faculty member here is like that. The student would be advised to speak with the faculty member about this, attend class, do the work attend office hours, participate in class, etc. A student who does all that and STILL can't pass the class? To my thinking that student should not get that degree. They haven't earned it. But I have never seen a case like that, where a student does everything they need to, proactively, three times with the same instructor in the same course and still cannot get a C. That is a clear exception.*

7. for MTH 221, CIS106 and ENL308, are the departments aware of the inclusion of their course in the policy? Does Business have an influence on content to insure it covers your required competencies?

*ENL308 exists only to serve our department. We manage the enrollments, we inform the required course content. The English Department usually staffs it, but we even do that from time to time. They know of the policy, and any students at risk for violating would be referred to us.*

*CIS106 exists mostly to serve our department. The Department of Computer Science enrolls about 5-10% of the students, we enroll the rest. Again, we largely control content, manage the enrollments, and determine who is permitted to take the course. Put differently, we commissioned CIS106 and ENL308 in 1998 for our purposes. They exist almost completely for us. Both of those departments defer to us for those courses. In Spring 2007 we met with Kad L. to ask that the CIS106 content be revised because it wasn't serving our needs. He agreed to make the changes we needed.*

*MTH221 is a bit different, though it does exist largely for our department and Chairman Barbosou recently increased the number of sections to accommodate our needs. We have asked the Math Department to work with us on this, and they have done so. I am sure they would be willing to continue to do so, but I could certainly live with the policy omitting MTH221. In fact, it probably should, as some students in other majors might need that course irrespective of our policy.*

8. Where you can't control multiple entries to a class (eg. Calc 201), are you comfortable that the policy can be enforced after the fact through advisement, DARD and student integrity.

*We try not to have to enforce the policy after the fact. If a student slips through the cracks and we have not advised or "warned" them prior to a third unsuccessful attempt, we have, to date, given them a fourth chance. That has happened once, to my knowledge. I'm not sure what is meant by how "student integrity" plays a role here. Please clarify.*

9. Are MTH 201 and MTH221 considered the same course for the 3 strikes policy?

*No. Students can therefore get six full cracks at the calculus apple.*

\*\*\*

I hope this satisfactorily answers your committee's questions. Please let me know how you'd like to proceed from here.

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS: FEBRUARY 23** - *Proposals received after the deadline may not be reviewed until next semester.*

Submit all proposals to the College Senate President electronically or on a disk with a hard copy.  
Please provide cover page information requested.

[facprez@brockport.edu](mailto:facprez@brockport.edu), [fsenate@brockport.edu](mailto:fsenate@brockport.edu)

College Senate Office, 426 Allen Building

## 5. PROPOSAL TITLE:

Please be somewhat descriptive, for example, *Graduate Probation/Dismissal Proposal* rather than *Graduate Proposal*.

Establish and maintain a "three strikes" policy on major courses in the Department of Business Administration and Economics.

## 6. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

Establish a policy limiting to three the number of times a student may attempt and complete a department course without earning the minimum passing grade as defined by the program of study. Students unable to earn the minimum grade will then be precluded from re-enrolling in the course and completing the major at the College.

## 7. SUBMISSION & REVISION DATES: PLEASE DATE ALL UPDATED DOCUMENTS and resubmit to the Senate Office electronically prior to Senate review and vote at [fsenate@brockport.edu](mailto:fsenate@brockport.edu).

First Submission	Updated on	Updated on	Updated on
<i>February 22, 2005</i>	<b>10/27/06</b>		

## 8. SUBMITTED BY: (contact person)

Name	Department	Phone	Email
Bill Dresnack	Business Administration and Economics	X5532	<a href="mailto:wdresnac@brockport.edu">wdresnac@brockport.edu</a>

## 9. COMMITTEES TO COPY: (Senate office use only)

Standing Committee	Forwarded To	Date
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enrollment Planning & Policies	Committee Chair	2/22/05
<input type="checkbox"/> Faculty & Professional Staff Policies	Executive Committee	3/28/05, 9/18/06
<input type="checkbox"/> General Education & Curriculum Policies	Senate Floor	10/9/06, vote 10/30/06
<input type="checkbox"/> Graduate Curriculum & Policies	College President	10/30/06
<input type="checkbox"/> Student Policies	Other	***REVIEW IN 2008
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate Curriculum & Policies		

\*(ROUTING NUMBER WILL BE A CHRONOLOGICAL NUMBER SEQUENCE FOLLOWED BY COMMITTEE INITIALS)

\*\*\*UP FOR REVIEW PRIOR TO THE PRINTING OF THE 2009-2011 COLLEGE CATALOG.

**RESOLUTION REGARDING  
PROPOSAL #24 04-05 UCEP – BUSINESS: 3-STRIKES RULE**

*(Dr. Jeffrey T. Lashbrook, College Senate President, October 27, 2006)*

**WHEREAS** the Department of Business Administration and Economics originally submitted in Winter 2005 a proposed “3-strikes rule” (#24 04-05 UCEP) which limited the number of times students could repeat a department course without obtaining the departmentally-defined passing grade, and

**WHEREAS** no College Senate action has heretofore been taken on this proposal and

**WHEREAS** the proposed policy does, however, raise larger issues for the College and its existing policies on repeating courses,

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the proposed policy be in effect for only the 2007-2009 catalog cycle and be it further

**RESOLVED** that the College Senate President, in consultation with the Executive Committee, appoint an ad hoc committee to further study this policy with respect to College-wide policy and report back no later than September 30, 2007 and at this time the status of the original “3-strikes” policy will be reconsidered.



**SUNY BROCKPORT**

## **Department of Business Administration and Economics**

February 22, 2005

TO: David Brannigan, Chair, College Senate Undergraduate Curriculum  
& Policies Committee (via email)

FROM: Bill Dresneck, Chair, Business Administration and Economics

SUBJECT: Request for Endorsement of Proposed Course Repeat Limitation

XC: Chris Murray, Dean of Professions ([cmurray@brockport.edu](mailto:cmurray@brockport.edu)), Dawn Jones, College Senate President,  
[facprez@brockport.edu](mailto:facprez@brockport.edu), College Senate Office ([fsenate@brockport.edu](mailto:fsenate@brockport.edu))

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Hi David.

The Department of Business Administration and Economics requests your Committee's endorsement and support for a proposed policy which would limit the number of times a student could complete a required course in a department major without a satisfactory passing grade.

The following pages present not only the proposal itself, but the somewhat unusual background and sequence of events leading to this, as well as an explanation of the reasons the department faculty see this as important to the College's mission.

I thank you in advance for the consideration of your Committee. I am at your disposal to answer questions.



## **Proposal to Establish a Policy Limiting to Three the Number of Times a Student May Unsatisfactorily Complete a Department Major Course**

**Department of Business Administration and Economics  
Respectfully Submitted by William H. Dresnack, Department Chair  
February 22, 2005**

The Department of Business Administration and Economics (“the Department”) respectfully requests College Senate support for a proposed policy that would limit to three (3) the number of times a student could attempt and complete a Department course without a satisfactory passing grade.

### **Background:**

The Department maintains rigorous standards for curriculum and all other aspects of internal operations, including teaching, scholarship, and service, consistent with our achievement of international accreditation as a member of AACSB International.<sup>1</sup> Academics at leading universities and colleges and business executives recognize AACSB standards as standing for “quality and continuous improvement.” The Department is proud that SUNY Brockport is a member of this organization.

The Department was in candidacy for AACSB accreditation in 1997 when Steve Breslawski, then Chair, submitted a set of proposals that would substantially revise some of the significant curricular issues in the Department. These revisions were an attempt to improve the quality of the education our students received at the College. The package of proposals was submitted January 31, 1997 to Ken Schlecht, then Chair of the Undergraduate Curriculum & Policies Committee. That package of proposals was approved in substantially the same form as the 1997 submission on May 11, 1998.

One of the few differences prompting my use of the word “substantially” in the last sentence is what’s at issue in this proposal. The language in the original January 31, 1997 document included the following paragraphs:

**“Require a grade of C- or better in all courses used to satisfy degree requirements, i.e., all courses used in calculating a student’s Major GPA. Currently, students may earn “D” grades in required courses and receive a degree, as long as the major GPA is at least 2.0. This runs counter to the paradigm of carefully designed and integrated curricula specified by our accrediting body. AACSB accreditation standards direct us to specify the importance and role of each course in our curriculum. Thus, each course and its contents are arguably a crucial part of the degree. To the extent that a grade of “D” indicates that a student did not learn the material in a course, it follows that the “D” student has not completed a crucial part of our degree requirements and should not be awarded a degree in Business Administration until they remedy the “D” grade.**

*In earning a grade of C- or better, students may repeat a course, at most, three times. Students unable to achieve a grade of C- or better after*

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<sup>1</sup> AACSB is the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. It is the world wide leader in the establishment and maintenance of standards for quality in management education.

*Repeating the course three times will not be able to complete the degree. We believe that these policies will encourage students to take their studies more seriously and enhance the quality and reputation of the program. Students unable to complete the degree may still be able to earn a minor in business and, through advisement, be directed to pursuing a different major/ degree. (Italics added.)*

We recognize that there may be an adverse effect on major headcount in the short term, but we are willing to tolerate the impact in the interest of continuous improvement in program quality.”

\*\*\*

These three paragraphs were in the 1997 submission. The middle paragraph did not appear in the April 28, 1998 revised submission that was approved May 11, 1998. It was one of the very few differences. (It may be the *only* difference; I’m not sure.) We refer here to this policy as the “three strikes” policy for simplicity. The rule simply means students will have three full opportunities to satisfactorily complete a course required for a Department major. It does not apply to courses outside of our Department except for CIS106, ENL308, Calculus (either MTH201 or MTH221) or Finite Math (MTH245). The first two of those courses, End User Computing and Business Writing, were “commissioned” for the Department. The Department, to a large extent, manages their enrollments, admission, and content. Few students outside of the Department are permitted to take these courses. Calculus or Finite Math is also required for virtually all majors in the Department. (One or the other is a prerequisite to all of our major programs, and the prerequisite courses have been demonstrated to be strong predictors of success in upper-level courses.)

More specifically, the rule means that if students are unable to earn the minimum passing grade in CIS106, ENL308, Calculus, Finite Math, or any ACC-, BUS-, or ECN-prefix course required for their major in the Department after three full opportunities, they would not be permitted to enroll in that course again.

The Department proceeded to publish and implement all of the changes approved. We were under the impression that the “three strikes” rule was properly approved, and accordingly included it in all published documents. It is likewise published in the 2003-2005 Undergraduate College Catalog, on page 117, as follows:

Three Strikes Policy: To satisfy the minimum grade requirement described in 3) above, students may take a course up to three times. Students who are unable to earn the required grade after three attempts will be blocked from further registration in the course and, as such, will not be able to complete their program of study.

This language is in the printed version of the catalog, and it is on our web site. It has been published. Students have been informed. Students in the Department are aware of it. They know it’s something with which they must comply.

I have been Chair of the Department since Fall 2003. At that time, I began implementation of the policy. We had not gotten it into the 2001-2003 catalog, so Fall 2003 became its effective date. Until this year I had not needed to enforce it; no student entering Fall 2003 or later of which we were aware had yet failed to complete a required course within three chances. I was told about a month ago (January 2005), when I needed to address the first students who had “struck out,” that the proper existence of the policy was being called into question. A conversation with Dr. Eileen Daniel, Associate Dean of Professions, brought me to this point, and to a “re-submission” to Senate of this policy. The Department is thus re-submitting this request to approve this policy.

## **AACSB Standards:**

The Department developed (and promulgated) the three strikes policy in part due to AACSB standards on retention. The principal AACSB standard addressing this issue is Standard 7, which provides:

The school has academic standards and retention practices that produce high quality graduates.  
The academic standards and retention practices are consistent with the school’s mission.

The commentary to the standard further states:

All schools should have procedures for dismissing students whose performance is inferior to their programs' academic standards.

To the extent students are permitted to linger in our programs without making satisfactory progress we risk graduating students who are not of "high quality." The Department has several mechanisms for dismissing students, similar to other Departments. None of them, however, address the issue of students making an inordinate number of attempts at passing a course in their major. As stated in our 1/31/97 submission, we have carefully selected each course in our programs for specific reasons, and to the extent that a student needs more than three full attempts to satisfactorily complete a course, we believe the student is not only hurting the program but is likely harming his or her own education. Certainly, a student's transcript reporting 4 or 5 or 6 attempts at a course in his or her major is evidence that the student should *not* be hired into a related position or *not* be admitted into a related graduate school.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, we believe this policy provides students a very fair (if not generous) attempt at a given course, while simultaneously aligning policy with our mission of "student success." (More specifics discussed below.)

### **Current Status:**

As stated, the faculty and staff of the Department believed, until a month ago, that the policy has been in existence for years. In fact, three years ago the Department adopted a Code of Conduct that includes the three strikes policy. The Code is a detailed explanation of Department policies, procedures and rules. It includes among other things, advisement issues, program expectations, and all Department policies provided in the 2003-2005 catalog.

When students declare a major or intent-to-major in one of the Department's programs, a copy of the Code of Conduct is provided to them. At the same time, we ask the students to read through and sign or initial all policies and procedures contained in the Code, as a means of ensuring that all policies, procedures and rules are disclosed, and that students are aware of them. We give students an opportunity to ask questions. We then keep the signed copy of the Code in their advisement folder. Among the policies in the Code is the policy at issue.

Effective Fall 2003, to ensure full and fair disclosure to students at risk of failing this policy, the Department created the following process.

- 1) We remind students, through ordinary Department advisement processes, that if they are a repeating a course they need to ensure they complete it within three full attempts.<sup>3</sup>
- 2) At the beginning of each semester, we request from Academic Computing Services a list of all students enrolled in a course for the third time.
- 3) A letter is sent to the students reminding them of the three strikes limitation and suggesting they meet with the course instructor and their advisor if they need help or advice. Copies of the letter are sent to the course instructor and to the student's academic adviser.

We believe that these procedures, taken together with the publication of the policy in the catalog and on the web site and the requirement that students read, understand, and initial the policy when declaring the major or intent-to-major, ensure that students are informed of the restrictions and that they are given a timely recommendation to meet with appropriate faculty and staff to try to ensure success.

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<sup>2</sup> It also runs counter to the recent proclamations of members of the SUNY Board of Trustees regarding four-year graduation rates.

<sup>3</sup> Student withdrawals are not counted in the three strikes. Students may withdraw from any course an unlimited number of times without violating department policies. We advise students at risk to withdraw if necessary.



To date we have not had a case in which we have had to limit the number of times a student may repeat one of our courses. However, we estimate ten students currently enrolled in our courses are in danger of violating the three strikes policy. (Ten is the number of students currently enrolled as of Spring 2005 in a department-required course for the third time.) We are thus in the position of having informed these students that they are at risk, while we are simultaneously being told that despite our warnings and advisement, we may not be able to enforce this rule without Senate approval (which we thought we had secured seven years ago). We thus ask for your approval consistent with an established policy that by all accounts students already understand and attempt to comply with.

We note for informational purposes that of the ten students currently at risk, five have overall grade point averages below 2.5. The remaining five are clustered between 2.53 and 2.69. We note too that in no case is a student in this group in danger of failing a *specialty* course. Each of these students is struggling with a core business course (seven students), or calculus (three students). (Five students are currently enrolled in at least two courses they have failed at least once.) We believe this is evidence that these students are not well suited to this discipline. Calculus must be completed prior to admission to the major, for the very reason that we believe success in it is a strong predictor of success in business study. The core courses are taught each semester in multiple sections with differing faculty. (Most also run in the summer.) Thus, students having difficulty with any of those courses should have been in a position to try the course the second time with a different instructor or at a different time of day, surmising that might have been part of the problem. Yet these ten students were apparently unable to determine the appropriate formula for completing a required core course the second time around. We believe this is probable evidence of unsuitability. A third unsatisfactory attempt is seen as *prima facie* evidence that the student is not suited to this major.

A related note regarding the ten students at issue during Spring 2005. Five have previously repeated or are currently repeating more than one department course. These five students, on average, had to repeat *five different required department courses* (actually 5.2). Only one course of the 26 at issue was a specialty (400-level) course. The rest were core courses that all department students should be able to pass (defined as C- or better generally). These five students, based on this data, either had repeated extenuating circumstances or were so unsuited to their chosen major that the College should *want* to advise them into a different department, for the students' own sake.

**Formal Motion:** We thus ask Senate to approve our proposed policy, as follows:

Students may attempt any required course for a major in the Department of Business Administration and Economics no more than three times from the earliest of the students' matriculation at SUNY Brockport or the date on which they begin taking courses at SUNY Brockport. Courses included in this policy are all courses with a prefix of ACC, BUS, or ECN, and courses numbered CIS106, ENL308, MTH201, MTH221, and MTH2454. If students are unable to earn a satisfactory grade in any of these courses within three complete attempts, the students will be blocked from registering for that course(s) again and as such will not be able to complete the degree. "Satisfactory grades" for this purpose are defined according to the program of study. (Generally this means a minimum grade of C-, but accounting majors are required to earn at least a C grade in all ACC-prefix courses.) A "complete attempt" means students finish the course and receive a grade of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, or E. Withdrawals (grade of W) do not count as a complete attempt.

### Justifications for the Proposed Policy:

We ask for your Committee's examination and endorsement of this policy. The principal reasons why we believe you should provide such support include the following.

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4 If the numbering systems change, then whatever the successor numbers are for these courses will likewise be subject to the three strikes policy. Any new departmental programs resulting in new required courses will likewise be subject to this rule. Changes to existing programs' complement of required courses are also subject to this policy.

- 1) *The policy is consistent with our mission.* Our mission, broadly defined, is “student success.” The Department has defined student success within the context of business education to mean our graduates will have opportunities for desirable entry-level professional positions or entrance into accredited graduate and professional schools. Our mission is to prepare students to pursue professional careers as business leaders.

Students who need more than three attempts to pass one of our classes are unlikely to be welcomed into the types of positions and graduate school programs for which we collectively (students and faculty) strive. Employers and graduate school admissions committees are savvy, sophisticated, and knowledgeable. They require college transcripts before hiring or admitting applicants. Multiple attempts at an undergraduate course in one’s major is a “red flag.” Our students’ opportunities at success are thereby limited when we allow them to linger in a program for which they are not well suited. The students would be much better served being advised into a different major more suited to their talents. If they decide at a later point to re-enter a business program, they will likely be better informed and prepared. This is clearly consistent with “student success,” our institutional mission.

- 2) *Finding the right fit.* Every student is unique. Every student needs to find the right situation for himself or herself. Business, unfortunately, attracts many students as a default option. It is a major chosen by a relatively large proportion of the population who really should be choosing “undeclared.”

We believe that *many* students, a disproportionate number relative to most other departments, will choose business if they are unsure of the right major for themselves. It is a common experience, especially for first-generation college students whose parents will not pay for college unless the students choose something “marketable.” It is unfair to these students and their families to allow them to continue to attend classes and pay tuition for a program of study based on such a default approach. They are better off, in both the short-term and the long-term, “calling the question,” and being convinced to do some serious research and reflection before continuing. We believe we do these students a disservice by not strongly suggesting that they consider other options. The “three strikes” policy is a method of doing so while giving these students a reasonable opportunity to first succeed as business majors.

- 3) *Ensuring effective peer interaction.* Department policies require extensive classroom activities beyond lecture and discussion. Built into our curriculum is widespread, targeted curricular integration of writing, presentations, computer use, and team assignments. As is true of all high-quality programs, an important component of student learning is interaction with other students. Our classroom student interaction is planned and is an important part of our curriculum. To the extent students are unprepared or incapable of handling such work, they limit the other students in the class, and the educational experience for all suffers. We believe the proposed policy helps manage the competing need to give students a reasonable chance to succeed while not allowing those who lag to hold others back with them.
- 4) *Limited space available.* The Department is the second largest at the college based on enrollments, but the Department has no input into admissions policies and processes. Students who meet the general qualifications of the college are admitted. A high percentage of students choose business as their major. Thus, we are required to accept and accommodate a very large number of students.

This creates many challenges. We have too many students chasing too few seats in our classes, resulting in overcrowded classrooms. A recent example: The January 21, 2005 Open Registration session, held the Friday before classes began, “welcomed” 34 students to the Department’s table. Due to prior excessive demand, most of our classes were already filled. Not closed in the sense of

us saying we don't want anymore, but closed in the sense of 1) not having enough desks and chairs in the classrooms to accommodate the demand, and closed in the sense of 2) having too many students asking to be added to classes which require time in computer labs with limited work stations. Also, closed in the sense of having more students than faculty can reasonably handle based on pedagogy that demands extensive writing, group presentations, and similar important but time consuming teaching protocols. The College's decision to admit students based on *total enrollments* without regard to *enrollments in specific departments* results in the business department being frequently forced to add too many students into our classes, thereby diminishing the value of the educational experience. Supporting a policy such as the one proposed simultaneously provides students a reasonable opportunity at success while providing the Department with a reasonable mechanism for not overcrowding our classes.

### Similar Mechanisms in Other Departments:

Other departments at the College have created similar mechanisms to evaluate student progress and terminate membership in a given major. A few examples:

1) Department of Social Work: This "sister" Department in the School of Professions publishes a limitation with respect to its undergraduate program. This is under the heading of "Continuance in the Social Work Major." As part of the stated requirements, students must submit documents for review for continuance. A Committee reviews these self-evaluations. Among the criteria is:

*"Continued demonstration of suitability and capacity to enter the profession of social work."*

This section continues as follows:

*Not later than the end of the fourth week of the spring semester, students reviewed will receive letters from the faculty. When recognizing the continuance of the student in the Social Work Program, the letter will, at the same time, make clear that continuance in good standing in the Program is contingent on the following: ....continued demonstration of suitability and capacity to enter the profession of social work. Students falling below the requirements specified above may be asked to discontinue from the Program at any time during their junior or senior years.*

These provisions clearly provide latitude to the Department of Social Work to evaluate students' "suitability and capacity" to enter this profession. As provided, the Social Work faculty have an opportunity to evaluate students' progress and to terminate the students' continuation in the program if the students are deemed "unsuitable for the profession." This is similar to, and probably more harsh than, the mechanism we propose. Our approach, as published, provides students with a "bright-line test" for determining whether they are meeting Department standards. The fact that they may be discontinued from the program *in the senior year* based on being "unsuitable" for their profession sets a rigorous standard for remaining in the program. We applaud the Social Work Department for establishing high standards. We believe our approach is similar, and perhaps more objective.

2) Bachelor of Fine Arts program, Department of Art: As stated in the college catalog,

*"the BFA is an intensive degree program in studio art, intended for students who plan to pursue a professional career in art or to prepare for specialized graduate study....Students in the BFA program are admitted by a required portfolio review. Students who do not have a portfolio may enroll in the BA or BS program in studio art, and begin to work on foundation courses to assemble a portfolio....BFA candidates will be reviewed each semester and will be expected to maintain a 2.5 minimum overall GPA and a 3.0 GPA in art. If advised to discontinue the program, a student may continue as a studio art major in the BA or BS degree program.*

The Department of Art has, based on the language above, likewise created a mechanism by which students may be "advised to discontinue the program." The "three strikes" policy is an objective, fair mechanism for achieving the same ends. The Department of Art has averaged 73 students over the past eight years, per the Office of Institutional Research. The Department of Business Administration and Economics has averaged over 900 students during the same period. The large enrollments in our Department make it difficult to use case-by-case

analysis to determine whether students should be permitted to continue as perhaps the Department of Art does. The three strikes policy serves as proxy for this system.

3) Department of Education and Human Development: This Department publishes the following:

#### **EHD Program Continuation Criteria: Adolescence Education Programs**

- Cumulative GPA must remain above a 2.5 while enrolled in the certification program. Students will be placed on Academic Probation and prevented from registering or remaining registered for any EDI courses if their GPA drops below the required 2.5.

The EHD Department thereby prevents re-enrollment for any student whose GPA drops below 2.5. This is effectively the same thing as the three strikes policy, except that in EHD there is no provision for a “second chance.” The Dept. of Business and Economics’ policy gives *students three full attempts* before precluding their re-enrollment. Our policy is lax when compared with that of EDI.

4) The Department of Public Administration: “Department policy states the following: Two grades of less than "B" in MPA core courses will result in dematriculation. You may not retake MPA core courses. An "E" in the any of the MPA core courses will result in dematriculation.”

We again believe that this policy is much harsher than that we provide. The resultant “dematriculation” is as harsh a policy as can exist. It’s an automatic termination for any single failing grade. Our policy gives majors the opportunity to completely fail *twice* before being prevented from completing any single course.

Again, the faculty and staff of the Department of Business Administration and Economics supports these other departments’ policies of establishing and maintaining standards for remaining in the stated degree programs. We hope other departments will likewise support our approach for accomplishing similar ends.

#### **A Note on Transfer Students:**

A potential issue was considered with respect to how this policy would be applied to transfer students. It is difficult, if not impossible, for the Department to manage this issue until students provide transcripts to Brockport, i.e., until they transfer into Brockport.. We thus would not begin counting attempts at a course until a give student matriculates or begins taking classes at Brockport, whichever comes first.

Practically, there is little possibility of students enrolling in Brockport business classes on a non-matriculated basis and getting more than three “bites from the apple.” Due to excess demand, few non-matriculated students are permitted into our courses. To simplify matters administratively, we provide here that as soon as students “affiliate” with the department, either by enrolling in our classes or matriculating into a degree program, we begin counting attempts. From that point forward, *any* attempt at a required course, including attempts at other institutions, would count toward the three attempts. Once a student matriculates here, we will advise students, as we have been doing, of the policy and of the best way of ensuring success.

#### **Summary:**

The faculty of the Department of Business Administration and Economics have carefully considered the issues surrounding the “three strikes” policy. We have analyzed AACSB standards, student retention issues, and other college policies that provide for similar student limitations on enrollment in particular courses or programs. We believe the “three strikes” policy is a reasonable balancing of competing needs, and is substantively similar to other “discontinuance” policies at the college, as illustrated above.

We thus ask for the endorsement of the Undergraduate Policies & Curriculum Committee, as well as the full College Senate, in supporting this proposal.